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IS ALL WELL?



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IS ALL WELL?

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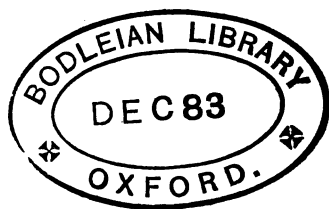
# IS ALL WELL?

"Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?"—2 KINGS iv. 26.

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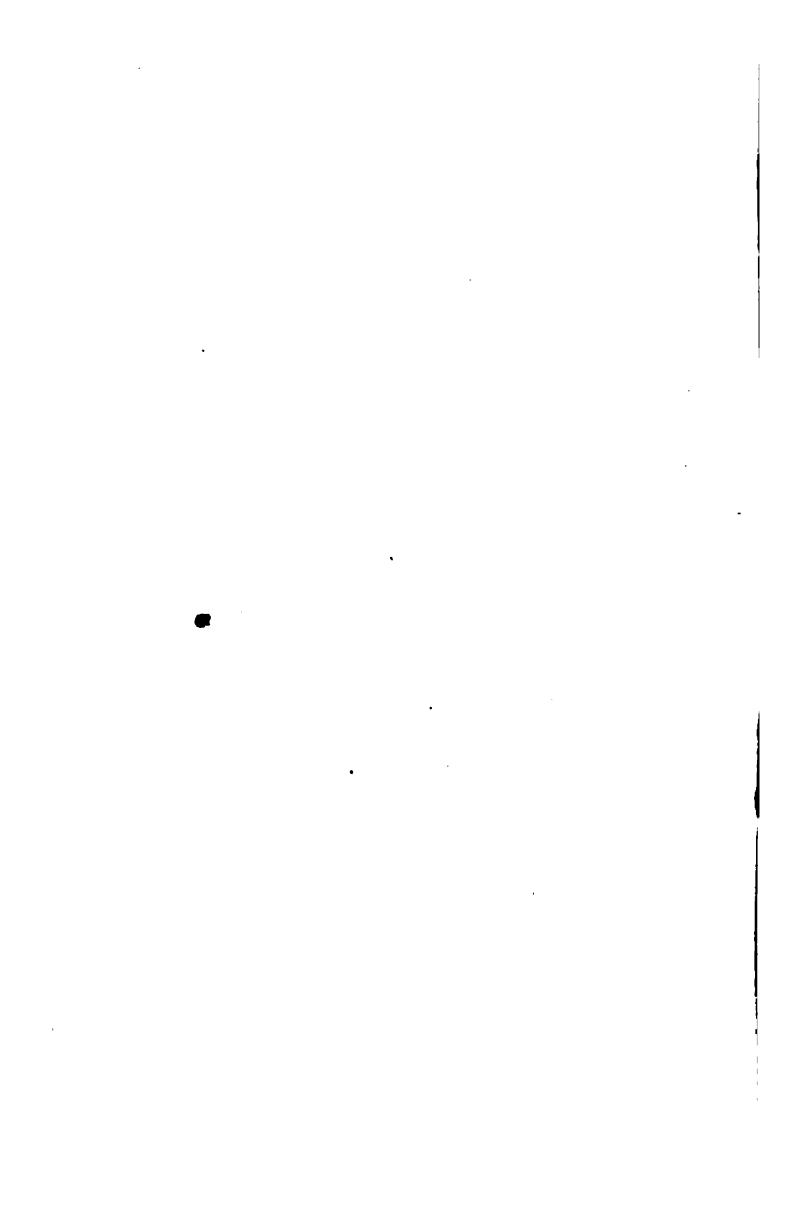




# CONTENTS.



HAF.	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
I. IS ALL WELL? . . . . .	11
II. ARE YOU QUITE HAPPY? . . . . .	18
III. ARE YOU ANXIOUS? . . . . .	26
IV. ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR SOUL? . . . . .	33
V. HAVE YOU PUT THIS QUESTION TO OTHERS? . . . . .	38
VI. WHY ARE YOU ANXIOUS? . . . . .	46
VII. JESUS DIED FOR ALL . . . . .	51
VIII. "FEAR NOT; ONLY BELIEVE" . . . . .	55
IX. "FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD" . . . . .	63
X. "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD" . . . . .	68
XI. "FAITH THAT WORKETH BY LOVE" . . . . .	73
XII. "HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE" . . . . .	80
XIII. "OCCUPY TILL I COME" . . . . .	85
XIV. "FOUNDED UPON A ROCK" . . . . .	93
XV. "AS A LITTLE CHILD" . . . . .	98
XVI. "EYE HATH NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD" . . . . .	103
XVII. WHY ARE YOU NOT ANXIOUS? . . . . .	108



## P R E F A C E.

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THE author's earnest wish—however far, in the working, the aim may fall short of the intention—is to write just a few pages that may serve as a simple reminder, to any one who may take them up, of *all that is to come*.

A reminder of the everlasting life beyond the grave:—of unending love—of work, of progress, of happiness—continuing without let or hindrance of sickness, or sorrow, or death; or misfortune, or ignorance, or temptation; or disappointment, or failure, any more for ever.

And this reminder the servant of the

Lord may perhaps put into the hands of some who would shrink from any conversation upon religion—who would be displeased at a word uttered to them upon the subject, even though that word came from a dear friend.

And the Christian,—though he and the author may not wholly agree upon all points; and indeed how can any two minds expect wholly to agree in this world of wonderful and endless variety,—the Christian will at least have sympathy with the author's aim: and will look on it—however weakly it may be worked out—with a reflection of his Lord and Master's gentle and loving and large-hearted forbearance: perhaps saying to himself in the Master's own words:—  
“He that is not against us is for us.”

And if the Lord God, who can bless with greatest blessing even the simplest

---

task undertaken for Him, sees fit to bless this little book with the power to move even one soul to look in the direction of everlasting joys:—if He in His wisdom chooses to make it the means of opening, as it were, only some tiniest crevice whereby but *one* mental eye may view the grand outline of all that was as a sealed book before—the author will have had a rich reward.



## CHAPTER I.

### *IS ALL WELL ?*

IN home—in health—in mind—in estate  
—is all well ?

Are friends always kind ? Does the sun always shine ? Does business—does even pleasure—always prosper ? Does no disappointment approach, clouding life's fairest joys ? Does no failure of a life hope, or aim, or work, threaten ?—Who can answer Yes to all these questions ?—Yet all may be well, notwithstanding.

Are your heart's loved ones all you could wish them ? Has life showered



many gifts upon you, and not kept back the dearest? Is your horizon clear and sunny?

Are your future prospects bright and promising? And your heart—whether you are old or young—is it strong and ready, nay, eager for the task before it?

Do your days pass quickly and happily? Does night ever bring welcome and needed rest—sweet peace and restoration for both body and mind?

Does each day dawn only to call you to some new gladness?—some fresh, some higher view of the work you have in hand?—or some new pleasure that is to fit you yet the better for your work?

Does nature only appear lovelier to you each day? Does its mingled harmony, from bird and bee, and murmuring leaves and whispering winds, and singing men and singing women, thrill your heart with

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sympathetic joy, while you ever imagine that

“ A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea ? ”

Only a few—a very few—can answer Yes ; and even these few only for a time. Yet still all may be very well.

We get only fragments of happiness here—mere transitory glimpses. But, what matter ? These glimpses are to the Christian as rays of promise, light of dawning—from his living Sun of Righteousness, that shall shine in full uninterrupted glory on the world to come, in the life immortal.

And so the Christian can smile, even when clouds come between him and all earthly brightness, and say, “ Yes ; all is well : and the sun will presently shine again : and while my Lord wills, I can

wait. He commands 'Let patience have her perfect work.' It is for me\* to obey. And He will give me strength to obey.

'His Spirit to my spirit  
Sweet words of comfort saith :'

assuring me again and again that not a single trial or sorrow, great or small, can touch me, unless *He* expressly, and *in love*, allows it. 'Under our greatest troubles,' it has been said, 'lie often our greatest blessings.' And—'we must take present suffering as a painful,' but very necessary, 'letting in of light.'"

"Then, does the Christian never feel sorrow, or impatience, in his waiting?—or monotony, or weariness in his work?" asks the man who has at length given up blind indifference to things spiritual, and who stands, as it were, on an unsafe, anxious borderland. "Does he never doubt? Is he

always contented ? Does *he* never echo the growing cry for ' more life and fuller ? ' ”

Yes : the Christian, still bearing within him his old sinful nature, does feel doubt and discontent and impatience and weariness and sorrow—at times, even yet ; to his shame and grief he owns it. Nevertheless these feelings can only come to him when he has forgotten his Lord. Remembering Him, he goes to Him day by day, often hour by hour, and drinks of the living water which He alone can give, and is never athirst.

“ Then the Christian does have his falls and his failures ? ” pursues the inquirer, who seems so often to forget that the Christian is but human. “ It is not always joy and triumph, even with *him* ?—He has his times of faltering, and stumbling—his hours of darkness—his backslidings and rebellions ? ”

Oh yes, indeed. The Christian's shortcomings seem to himself—nay, and not only seem, but are—innumerable. But though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand. And this is his comfort. He grieves over his sins and his weaknesses, and his constant want of faith—how can he help doing so ? But then he once more remembers his Lord—his Saviour ; and he says to himself—

“ Look away to Jesus,  
Soul by woe oppressed ;  
’Twas for thee He suffered,  
Come to Him and rest.  
All thy griefs He carried,  
All thy sins He bore ;  
Look away to Jesus ;  
Trust Him evermore.”

For, in all his sinfulness, and in all his faithlessness, he still loves his Saviour : and well he knows that that dear Saviour loves

him. And for the rest — the Valley of Humiliation is a good way to go, and even through it he can say, "All is well,"  
Yes—

"Through the love of God our Saviour,

All will be well :

Free and changeless is His favour,—

All, all is well !

Precious is the blood that healed us,

Perfect is the grace that sealed us,

Strong the hand stretched forth to shield us, —

All must be well."

[illegible]

head held loftily, mouth all smiling pretence—but with a poor soul sitting within in sick distaste of all things.”

And, on the other hand, those are often the most happy who look the least so—since their happiness by no means lies on the surface. And they whisper in their hearts—

“ These surface-troubles come and go,  
Like ruffings of the sea ;  
The deeper depth is out of reach  
To all, our God, but Thee.”

But are *you* quite happy ? we ask of another.

“ No,” is the answer again. “ As a matter of course, I am not. I am not so unfortunate as some, perhaps ; but still I have had a good many troubles. If things had been just a little different ;—but it is no use wishing.”

No : and even if it were, and we could



*[The page contains faint, illegible markings and artifacts.]*

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fall back upon? Or, if not, and if your happiness is really, whether you know it or not, bound up in *one* set of ideas—*one* round of duties—*one* narrow task, out of all the thousands carried on day by day in this wonderful world—what will you do when a change comes?

What would you do *should the Lord come*?

You have only thought, perhaps, of getting your own work done, and it has never entered your mind to do anything for *Him*. What will He say to you when He comes?—For come He surely will, since, though heaven and earth may pass away, His word shall not pass away; and He said—“*I will come again.*”

Those only are quite happy, then, who are ready, and watching, and waiting for the Son of Man—the Saviour of the world,—the Lord Jesus Christ, at His appearing and His kingdom. Oh—

“ Beware what earth calls happiness ; beware  
All joys but joys that never can expire.  
Who builds on less than an immortal base,  
Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death.”

For who, spite of all that is said, can prove that there is no “ immortal base ” on which to build ?—that there are no great and grand views of things, beyond our bodily ken, but which shall in another life be opened to us ?—a mine of wonders, an inexhaustible reservoir of delights ! Oh, happy Christian ! for only he can see already, with the eye of faith, this marvellous prospect ! His Lord says often to his soul—Be ready for it, and for much more ! And to be ready is his aim, his hope, his ever-increasing happiness.

And whenever, 'in the history of mankind, some unexpected turn of events has suddenly called a man out from among his fellow-men to take a new stand before

them all, to set his hand to new duties, and his mind to work upon new responsibilities,—he, who by a long course of patient labour has been steadily qualifying himself, is sure to be the most ready—the most able—the most at ease—and the most happy in his new position. Now the diligent work of bygone years is made available. Now at length comes the opportunity—oh how keenly enjoyed!—of using all the varied experience gained during many long days and months and years, in which he perhaps felt more than once very close to despair. Ah, they were indeed hard days and months and years!—yet he feels now, as he looks back upon them, that not even one could safely have been spared him. Each did its own part in preparing him for the happy present.

And so we may be sure that it will by and by be with the Christian. He also

will take his new standing, when the time comes, quite ready for it ; and knowing all he has to do—for love for his Lord and for all around him, and care for their and his own immortal interests ; and also his “light affliction,” enduring but in comparison for a moment—will have taught and prepared him long before.

And the Christian knows that he will thus be ready : nevertheless, his high confidence is not in himself, but wholly in his Lord—who has done all for him, who gives, and will give him, all things, and in whom his soul will at last find perfect and blissful satisfaction, that will endure, not for a time, but for ever.

And — inspiring thought ! — this dear Lord may come this very day ! and this new sweet life begin at once !

And how quickly merely earthly joys and sorrows recede in the light of such con-

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siderations as these ! And how, in view of his high destiny, can the Christian answer anything but yes when you ask *him*—"Are you quite happy ?"

"For how can the heart e'er be drooping or sad,  
Which God hath once touched with the light of  
His grace ?  
Can the child have a doubt, who but lately hath laid  
Himself to repose in his Father's embrace ?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### *ARE YOU ANXIOUS?*

"OH yes!" many are ready at once to answer; for there is not over-much sympathy in the world, and even friends do not always remember our anxieties. "Oh yes, indeed! Who can help being anxious? It is all very well to talk about happiness, but we never pretended to be really happy. As soon as we have spent our strength in putting down one care, another rises up in its place. Are we anxious?—Yes:—from the beginning of the year to the end of it again."

"But one might imagine," observes another, "from what has been said, that the

Christian had *no* anxieties !— That all worldly concerns prospered with him !— That no money-troubles, or mind-troubles, or heart-troubles, great or small, ever perplexed and vexed and wearied *him* !— And that, as for mere food and raiment and shelter, he never thought of them ; that, in short, he had stepped just a little above this earth and all in it !”

And so the real Christian has, and worldly cares are quite secondary with him. But though his soul lives above them, his body does not ; and anxieties will knock at the door of his heart again and again. And then, with his mind he fears, but with his soul he trusts ; and all his cares he takes to his Lord :—telling Him everything, as he could not tell even his closest, dearest earthly friend. And many and wonderful and gracious are the answers he gets. He is told that his Lord



shall fight for him, and that he shall hold his peace; that in quietness and confidence shall be his strength; that he has only to ask and have; that his God can at any moment open a pathway in the wilderness, and show him springs of sparkling water in the desert. He is reminded "how little we know what forces are at work sometimes, to bring about a change for the better in that which seems hopelessly adverse." He is told that through cloud and through sunshine he has but to go on in simple faith from hour to hour, conscientiously doing his daily work; and that his God will never fail to give him daily bread, daily strength, and daily joy.

And when the Christian is told all this his heart leaps within him for gladness, and he *knows* that relief will come. And on working, and he goes on praying—he goes on *praising*. And relief

*does* come:—and not seldom in ways most wonderful and unexpected. And often, as he calls to mind past mercies, the Christian, in the face of what many would call “the gravest anxiety,” simply cannot feel it. He has his heaven-given shield of faith before him; and it is only when he lowers that, that he can see anything to trouble him.

“But all this must be the effect of an overstrained imagination,” returns the worldly man loftily, and quite unmoved. “At all events, I must own that it is entirely beyond *me*, and that I simply do not understand it. Also, while the world is what it is—just a chaos of contradictions and misery, and wide-spread evil ready to burst out at any moment and overwhelm all in destruction—I do not see how any thoughtful person can escape anxiety!”

“And therefore,” rejoins another worldly man—not loftily, but only lightly and carelessly—“as anxiety is not a pleasant companion, perhaps the better plan would be to keep out thought, and to rush into all the pleasure and agreeable excitement that one could get!”

“But one cannot always be rushing on,” says a third, “either after work, or after pleasure. One wants a little rest, sometimes, and then all sorts of considerations will crowd in upon one’s mind. And leaving out smaller anxieties—there are always the great ones to think of. Look at the state of the world—already remarked upon;—we must remember it occasionally, and ponder over it in perplexity, however thoughtless we may be. And what is the meaning of it? What is the key—if there is any key?—What is become of us all? Where is security

for anything in these times? Where is any real satisfaction to be obtained?—Am I anxious? Yes:—and the world only appears to be one great hold of anxiety, increasing daily. And though one hopes on always for the best, one fears also the worst. And it seems quite probable that instead of good triumphing, and the world becoming peaceful and happy, as the Christian expects, the combined forces of evil men will by and by, all in a moment, bear down unawares upon the good—only a little band, however brave and devoted—and sweep them away from the face of the earth ! ”

No : not sweep them away. Their Lord, before evil rises to this terrible head, will, as they firmly believe, take them away. He will be their Ark of Refuge until the battle with evil is overpast. He Himself will undertake that battle, as we

read again and again — and who shall stand when *He* appeareth ?

And so the Christian waits—his anxiety lost in trust — waits daily and hourly. His Lord's word will not fail : at the right moment *He will come.*

## CHAPTER IV.

### *ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR SOUL ?*

BUT leaving all other anxieties alone—and public and private and national and individual they cannot be numbered—have you that *one* great anxiety which should without doubt stand before them all?—Are you anxious *about your soul* ?

Do not put off the question. Why should you ? To-day, if we harden not our hearts, there may be hope for us. To-day is the wise man's day. *Now* is the day of salvation.—Who dares count upon to-morrow ?

The soul of man often rouses itself, and cries for the food which he will not give it.

It is anxious: but it cannot always make itself heard. And when the man does pause for a moment to listen to its complaints—he only does so to put them off upon every imaginable pretext.

Yet the soul is first and greatest—an immortal inhabitant of a house of clay—a wonderful house, truly, and fashioned by the Lord God Himself; but still only a house, made of inanimate earth, formed of the dust of the ground—and to dust it is well aware that at death it must return: and yet, notwithstanding this, it arrogantly asserts itself and its affairs on every occasion before those of its immortal resident.

“Am I anxious?” returns one poor soul—glad of the question; glad to be allowed to speak. “Oh yes: I have been anxious for years. It is of no use to say to me, ‘I hope that all may be right at the last.’ I want something more than that. Such a

shallow, unfounded hope is worse than nothing. I want to *know* that all is right *now*. How can one hope to be received into a happy world beyond the grave—how can one hope in any way to be ready for it, without the smallest preparation? How shall I one day answer the great and just and holy God, who holds all souls accountable for deeds done in the body? What shall I do to be saved?”

“Anxious about my soul?” cries another. —“Oh, if only I knew that *it* was safe—where would be my need for anxiety on any other account? I could look on calmly then at the frustration of my dearest hopes here—for should I not have a treasure of life and love and glory that could not fail me, laid up in heaven itself? If I knew that *my soul* was safe—how could *anything* touch me really to my hurt? What could even death take from me that the



Vanquisher of death would not, in His own good time, restore to me again?—Ah, I could sing then, in deepest, most earnest gratitude—

‘ Now let the wildest storms arise,  
Let tempests mingle seas and skies,  
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,  
But all my treasures with me bear.’ ”

“ Yes, I am anxious,” says another. “ I will confess it to you, as you have put the question ; though to tell people in general that I am anxious about *my soul*, would, as every one knows, only expose me to ridicule.”

Quite true,—and very strange also, when one comes to think of it. If men have souls, why may they not be anxious about them ? Why should a man crave all he can get for his body, yet be quite easy in leaving his soul to starve ?

“ Anxious ! ” exclaims yet another. “ I

am anxious night and day ! How can I do my duty ?—how be happy ?—how be safe while my soul is in danger ?—I tremble at each passing event. I hear of accidents, of sickness, of death—daily. How can I say how soon my earthly account may be closed, and my opportunities cut short for ever ? Does any one suggest that it may not be for ever ? The vague suggestion cannot satisfy me for an instant. I want certainty. Great interests are at stake.—Will they be decided for or against me ?—What shall I do to be saved ?—What do I deserve but death ?

‘ All my life cries out against me,  
Squandered substance, wasted hours ;  
Soul and body desecrated,  
Conscience seared, sin-vanquished powers.  
Mercy ! Mercy !  
Ere the storm of judgment lowers.’ ”

## CHAPTER V.

### *HAVE YOU PUT THIS QUESTION TO OTHERS?*

SOME have been ready to accuse the Christian of selfishness, because at heart he is so thoroughly happy. For

“ The life that is the blesseddest  
Is not always the brightest ;  
And hearts that seek no present rest,  
Are evermore the lightest.”

And the world knows this very well—even when loudest in its assertions to the contrary. Spite of the Christian's grave face, it is easy to discover that his happiness is sound and real. And though he is  
“ sorrowful,” yet is he not at the same

time "alway rejoicing?" And the world says in displeasure—"How *can* he be so happy, and so easy, and contented, while things everywhere are daily growing worse and worse? He pretends to feel for all. Thousands are in want and trouble and sorrow—yet there he is—happy! Oh yes, he is certainly selfish!"

And of course there are some selfish Christians—but as a rule the Christian is most *unselfish*. For is he not ever striving to follow in the footsteps of his Master, who went about doing good, and who pleased *not* Himself.

There are many who never pray for themselves, for whom the Christian prays continually, and for whom he would be willing even to lay down his life, if by so doing he could win them salvation. Surely there is only *unselfishness* in this!

He rejoices with the glad, and weeps

with the sorrowful. Do selfish men do this?

And with what strange and monstrous ingratitude his heart would be filled if he were *not* happy—even in the face of all that may seem for the time to be against him! His God gives him pardon—justification—present succour in every need—the support of His gracious presence every moment—the comfort of His never-changing love—and great and glorious hopes for the future—and much, much more—for his blessings are without number:—and what can he do in return for them but pour out his heart in gratitude and rejoicing every day of his life?

But many a Christian is to blame in this, that he does not oftener speak of his joys and his privileges. But would worldly people wish him to do so? No, that they would not. In their opinion he

says far too much already: and they would feel much more comfortable if he would but be entirely silent. And this, perhaps, may help to explain the reason why the Christian *appears* sometimes to wish to keep his good things to himself. He is but human, and it is neither easy nor pleasant to him to encounter the laughter and disdain, the coldness, or at least the indifference, which is generally all the gratitude he gets for trying to make those around him as happy as himself.

But go to the Christian and confide in him. Tell him that you *wish* to know the way of life. Ask him to guide you, by God's blessing, into that narrow way, and see whether you will have any reason to complain of him then! See with what love and joy he will meet you! See how patient and tender he will be with you, and how anxious over you!—and how

faithful to you ! Perhaps no after-ingratitude could wholly turn him against you ! Is it easy to find such a friend in any but a Christian ? Surely not.

And the Christian is ever wishing to put to, oh how many and many a one !—the question—“ Are you anxious about your soul ? ” But, oh, it is a difficult question to utter—a question which he will have to pray for strength to put even to those he best loves.

Yet it is a question that, in one way or another, *must* be put. For is the Christian to say *he loves*—and yet to allow those to whom his heart goes out with deep, yearning tenderness, to walk blindfold into danger without telling them of it ? Is *this* the way in which he is to show his affection for his dearest ? Is he who loves them, to hold his tongue until it is too late to speak ? And shall his

reason for this be that he could not bear even to *seem* to say—"I am wiser than you?" And will such a reason be accepted "in that day," by the righteous Judge of all the earth, as a good and sufficient reason for not telling the good tidings of great joy to *all*, but especially to those nearest and dearest?

O Christian! do you fear to run a little risk now of displeasing those you love; and do you never fear when you think of the terrible look of reproach—terrible because so full of anguish and despair—with which they will regard you, and which will pierce your heart as with a sword, in that day of the Lord when your question would no longer be of any avail?—and when an anxiety more grievous than any that ever oppressed them before has seized upon them, and there is no remedy?

And do you not fear to run the risk of



incurring your Lord's displeasure ? Do you fear frail human beings, but not Him ? Will you not please Him by putting a question which—though it may possibly for a time anger those you love—in its full fruition may please them everlastingly ?

But oh it is a question that must be put prayerfully — humbly — lovingly — patiently. And if it is indeed so put, you cannot be likely to give any lasting offence. Cast your bread in faith upon the waters, and you shall find it after many days. Sow your precious seed, and even though you go forth weeping with it, you have the promise of the Lord God that you shall one day return with joy, bringing your sheaves with you.

And, after all, it is perhaps those whom your question does *not* offend, for whom you should most fear. Those, that is, who are inclined to take what you say lightly,

and who see no cause for either anxiety or offence, and who but laugh at you that you should make such a great effort to accomplish such a trifle.

But heed neither offence, nor careless indifference—only put your question. Go bravely out, if need be, from the sunshine and warmth of your friend's regard, into the gloom and coldness of his displeasure. You will reap your reward in time. Remember your Lord. If He endured contradictions against Himself, can *you* expect to escape them ?

## CHAPTER VI.

### WHY ARE YOU ANXIOUS?

"THE Lord is nigh unto *all* that call upon Him, to *all* that call upon Him in truth."

Why, then, are you anxious?

"Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others, that we are not always strong;  
That we are ever overborne with care,  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
Anxious, or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

"But," says the anxious one, "these words, however beautiful, have no reference to *my* one great anxiety—which concerns my soul. They are for the Christian,  
    "me."

And yet the text above them—the word of comfort and encouragement from God's own Book—says, "The Lord is nigh unto *all* them that call upon Him :"—not nigh unto such and such persons only, but unto *all* "that call upon Him in truth."

Why, then, are you anxious ?

"The little worries which we meet each day,  
May lie as stumbling-blocks across our way,  
Or we may make them stepping-stones to be  
Of grace, O Christ, to Thee."

And so it is—not only with the little worries, but with the great ones—the great cares and trials of life—and with this one greatest care. It, too, may be made a stepping-stone to Christ the Lord : and you may leap from it in your fear, as you would never do in ease and security, to the Rock which cannot be moved.

Be *thankful*, then, for this great anxiety that has found its way into your heart.

There are many who have never felt it.  
Pray for them, while you offer praise for  
yourself; for—

“ That God has once whispered a word in thine ear,  
Or sent thee from heaven one sorrow for sin,  
Is enough for a life, both to banish all fear,  
And to turn into *peace* all the troubles within.”

But, again — *why* are you anxious?  
Have you been enabled to lay down the  
natural pride of your heart? Do the  
words, “ There is no difference—*all* have  
sinned,”—raise only greater contrition, and  
no thought of rebellion in you? Do you  
freely and humbly own, before a righteous  
God, that you are a sinner, *without excuse*?  
Because, if so, your anxiety has no ground  
to stand upon.

Are you willing to put all considerations  
as to whether you are better, or at least no  
worse than others—whether you have  
done your best—whether you have led a

more or less useful and respectable life, &c.,—aside, and to look at things as your Lord God would have you look at them ?

“ Oh yes,” answers the man who is really in earnest. “ It is easy for those who only want to quiet their consciences, and to put off their starving souls a little longer, to talk of doing their best, and being no worse than others, but a man’s best is only a miserable catalogue of shortcomings, after all. I want something far better—I want something *good*. I may have been respectable and honourable, and even praiseworthy in the sight of men, but I am thinking—not of man—but of the great and holy God now. Am I fit—can I ever be fit—to appear before *Him* ? I was born with a heart of sin ; I have lived in a world of sin, till I have come to think lightly of it. But will the great Almighty God ever think lightly of it ? Oh, do not ask

*why* I am anxious ! *Sin*—the sin of a life-time—lies like a mountain upon my soul. How can I ever get rid of it ? How can I hope that a holy God will ever forgive, or receive me ?

## CHAPTER VII.

### JESUS DIED FOR ALL.

OH, blessed words!—full of healing for all anxiety! for if He died for all, He died for *me*! However sinful I am, He died for *me*!

Yes; He, the Lord of life and glory, came not to call the righteous, but *sinners*, to repentance. He “*died for the ungodly.*” —“While we were yet sinners,” says the • Apostle, “Christ died for us.”

“Christ is my peace; He died for *me*,  
For *me* He shed His blood;  
And as *my* wondrous sacrifice,  
Offered Himself to God.”

You ask—“*Can* He forgive me? *Will* He forgive me?”—Why else did He die?



*Whose* Saviour is He, if not yours ? You bring Him a broken and a contrite heart—it is what He delights to accept, and to cherish into joy, and confidence, and happiness, and love.

When He was on earth, His enemies in their contempt called Him “the Friend of publicans and sinners !”—Oh, blessed name ! Oh, gracious title—which He, the King of Heaven, did not disdain to bear, and which will never be forgotten while the world lasts ! *Can* He—*will* He forgive ? This very title—“*Friend* of sinners”—answers for Him ;—bringing comfort to the heart of many a poor sinner, and making it sing for joy.

Do you cast yourself, and all your anxieties, on this gracious Saviour ? the  
I—~~from~~ from the foundation of the  
living sacrifice—holy, willing,  
; pitying love—a sacrifice pro-

vided by God Himself to meet just the very need that is now so grievously troubling you!

Will you give yourself up to this kind, all-powerful Friend of sinners, taking His remedy for your anxiety—for your sin? Will you accept this balm of Gilead? Will you accept the Great Physician Himself? He offers Himself to you; He waits to be accepted. Will you send Him away? He offers you His love, His protection, His blessed companionship for ever. Will you take them? He is “of all kingdoms King:” and one day, in the sight of all men, He will seat Himself upon His glorious throne: and in that day you will either flee from Him in terror, as from a dread, all-seeing, and invincible enemy—or you will before have been placed by Himself beside Him on His throne, knowing yourself to be as dear to Him as a bride to her bridegroom—dear as a perfect, heavenly bride, to a

bridegroom who is Heaven's Lord and King !  
—Will you accept Him ?—~~now~~, in this day  
of salvation, while He is yet the Saviour,  
patient, long-suffering, and of great good-  
ness ! Or, will you put Him off till the  
day of grace is past, and you meet Him as  
the Righteous Judge of all the earth, but  
as Friend and Saviour never more ?

“ Oh, *how* shall I accept Him ? ” cries the  
anxious soul. “ Oh, that I could !—that I  
knew how to approach Him ! Ah, happy  
Christians ! who have left behind for ever  
the storm-tossed, rock-bound shore on which  
I stand waiting in fear and trembling !  
Ah, happy Christians ! Angry surf, jagged  
rock-edges, and leaping, foaming waves, no  
longer affright them ! Their vessel is sailing  
in smooth waters, and under sunny skies,  
and the Lord whom they love is at the

I—what can I do ? How  
struction that awaits me ? ”

## CHAPTER VIII.

*"FEAR NOT; ONLY BELIEVE."*

"BE of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

Who is it speaks the words? It is the Lord, who has made His way, perhaps in the fourth watch of the night, over the troubled waters. It is the Good Shepherd, who has come to seek and to save His one sheep that was lost. It is the Saviour of the world Himself, who brings comfort to the poor stricken soul that had no hope but in Him.

Shall *you* be ready, and willing, and waiting, and will not *He* be the same?

And do you ask, "what must I *do* to

be saved ?” Nothing. Only believe *His* word, and all will be well. He says He came to save you. Honour Him by believing Him—

“ Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude ;  
None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.

His great Apostle, instructed by Him, says—

“ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

“ No condemnation ! precious word !  
Consider it, my soul ;  
Thy sins were all on Jesus laid ;  
His stripes have made thee whole.”

Take your Bible, and read promise after promise—great and glorious and sure as  
— on whose word it rests is sure. And

each promise as you come to it is for *you*—if you will but honour your Lord by taking it as it stands. In Christ all things are yours—all power, all faith, all security, all joy, all love, are *yours*!

But now perhaps you go down—down—down—deep into despondency again, and you say—

“Not for me!—Oh, it is too good!—too great!—too wonderful!—All this cannot be for *me*. And besides how can such a sinner as I am walk, ‘not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?’—Oh no, I see I must give up hope. Heaven was never meant for me.”

Will you, then, shut yourself out—as so many do—when God Himself opens the gate and says, “Come unto Me?”—“Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?”—“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”—“Ho, *every one* that

thirsteth, come ye to the waters ;” and—  
“ *Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely.”

And for whom was heaven intended, if *not* for you ? Where is the Christian who was not once, like you, a sinner and unworthy ? Where is the Christian who will not own himself a sinner and unworthy still ? And how can you expect *at once* to be able to walk as the advanced Christian walks ? Your soul is new-born in the Lord—weak, tender, and helpless. It is but as a babe in Christ. And like the eager, inexperienced child, who has yet to learn how little it can do, it will make many mistakes, and have many a humbling and painful fall, it may be, before it is able to walk abroad in strength of manhood.

But the little child is not left in its helplessness to guard and guide itself: it is under most constant and watchful and lov-

ing care and protection. And so it is with the newly-awakened soul.

Sometimes the child thinks that he would like a little more freedom : sometimes, perhaps, the soul is ungrateful enough to think the same.

But—"the heir," it is written, "*as long as he is a child*, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all ; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." And this is not because the father does not love his child, but rather because his love for him is so great ; and because he will neglect no possible means by which his son may be at length made ready to enter into the possession of his inheritance with all honour, prepared alike for its duties and its enjoyments.

And so, again, it is with the soul. It also is under many, and sometimes hard



and severe tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father. And this is not because its great heavenly Father does not love it, but because "precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little," through all its earthly course, in order that the soul also may be fully prepared, when the appointed time at length arrives, to enter with joy into its everlasting inheritance.

The child's lessons are very short and simple;—but it often, by its own conduct with regard to them, makes them very long and wearisome and difficult. And this is exactly what the soul does with its lessons.

It is asked simply to believe—that is, to believe God's own words as they are written in His Book, just as one would believe, and gladly put one's trust in, the words written in a dear friend's letter.

Ought this to be such a long and difficult task as so many souls make it ?

Will *you* believe, anxious soul ?

You cannot *understand* all you are asked to believe : there is much, very much, that is as yet far, far beyond you. But never mind that ; you are not asked, or expected to understand—only to believe.

Will you believe ?

It is written—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER *believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

Do you believe this ?

It is written—"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." Have you drawn nigh to Him, and shall He *not* draw nigh to you ?

Do you say—"Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief ?"—Then be very sure He will do so. Bring unbelief, doubts,

12

IT ALL VEHES

pass ~~unconsciously~~—bring all to Him.  
Roll the great burden from your soul, and  
leave it to His feet. And now rise rejoicing,  
you have gained a Friend whom you can-  
not lose again.

## CHAPTER IX.

*"FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD."*

AND now at length the weary, doubting, troubled soul has opened its eyes to the truth. It has solved what was to it a great mystery — solved it by simple, humble, childlike belief, without question. And its anxieties and fears are at an end. It has joy and peace in believing. "All that pressed upon it like a burden intolerable, giving it an utter distaste for everything, is now removed." It is free; it is happy.

And this change is as a transition from night to day; and at first the relief seems almost too great to be borne—the intense

happiness too wonderful for belief:—and surely, also, too great, too glorious to last ?

But no, it is real and abiding: and *this* soul also sails now in calm waters, beneath a blue and sunlit sky. And everything around appears to it to be clothed in wondrous new beauty. For “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” So it has always been with every single soul born again to joys eternal. It feels that it never knew what happiness meant till now. The days were surely never so bright before, the nights never so full of calmest, holiest peace—as it lies safe and resting beneath the wings of the Lord, covered, as sings the Psalmist, “with His feathers.” Not a sound but brings music, sight but seems, in one way or

another, to give back a reflection of this heavenly new beauty.

And older Christians regard this young one with, oh, what tenderness! For now, at every point, they recall the days of *their* new-born joy. But would they give in exchange for it—sweet indeed though it was—their deeper, richer, fuller joys of to-day? Oh no, no! A thousand times no! New joys are ever springing up for them—new knowledge—stronger faith—yet brighter and brighter hopes—yet dearer, sweeter, closer love. But some of them say to the young Christian—

“We wish, sometimes, when we look back, that when we were as you are, we had made more haste to ‘follow on to know the Lord.’ But we were saved; that was all we thought of for a time. We forgot that there was much for us to learn—much to do. Others were anxious,

as we had been ; we did not think enough of these, we did not do all for them that we might have done. We sat as it were in a dream of glory for a little while. And often we thought, or we sang—

‘ Only to sit and think of God,  
Oh, what a joy it is !  
To think the thought, to breathe the Name,  
Earth has no higher bliss !

‘ There’s not a craving in the mind,  
He does not meet and still ;  
There’s not a wish the heart can have,  
Which He does not fulfil.’

But now, if that time were with us again, we would say to ourselves continually—  
*‘ Follow on to know the Lord.’* Take some new step each day—

‘ Think not of rest, though dreams be sweet ;  
Start up and ply your heavenward feet ;  
And ne’er again your loins untie,  
Nor let your torches waste and die,  
Till when the shadows thickest fall,  
Ye hear your Master’s midnight call !’

For these days of first love for the Lord are as the first days of a great journey which shall never end. And all the Christian's cravings in this life, and all his happy hopes in the next, will be met one by one, and wholly satisfied as he advances on this wonderful journey."



## CHAPTER X.

### *"FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD."*

WE can take but one step at a time, and we can give the mind fairly to but one task at a time.

"One by one, thy duties wait thee,  
Let thy whole strength go to each."

So we say when we are thinking of our everyday work and undertakings, great or small, of this life. But why not use the same reminders when we are considering the life and work of the soul? It would save us many a discouragement. For neither can the soul attend fairly to more both one task at a time: and neither

can *it* take more than one step at a time.

The young Christian, then, having taken his first step—that of simple unquestioning belief in God's Word—has now to think of his second.

Older Christians have told him that having got so far, by God's grace and mercy, he must not stand still, but proceed at once on his wondrous journey—"following on to know the Lord."

But he has not to think of this great journey as a whole—his Lord will always do that for him: he has but to think of the step which lies before him.

He reads that "faith without works is dead;" therefore he must *work* as he advances. And he is, as a rule, quite willing to work. Indeed, he is often so eager in taking up different tasks, that both he and they suffer from his forget-

fulness of the fact that he can, after all, attend to but one at a time, and that a divided work is never a success.

But what has he to do ?

To let his light shine before men—to show himself a Christian, in every word and deed of his life. He will find these seemingly small steps quite enough for him to take for many a long day.

Yet, while he strives to undertake as a Christian just "the daily round, the common task"—he must avoid the slightest approach to ostentation: for He who said:—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may *see* your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" said also:—"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in *secret*;" and—"When thou prayest, ~~enter~~ into thy closet, and when thou hast

shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in *secret*." And we know that the Lord expects His followers to obey the beautiful and life-giving *spirit* of His words rather than the *letter*, which killeth.

And not only in word and deed must the young Christian study to show himself approved of God, but he must work in his own heart also, and by degrees "bring into captivity every *thought* to the obedience of Christ." And to do this he will have to spend much time in prayer, and in waiting humbly upon his God—realising that he must be patiently content for a time to teach rather by his life than by his words.

And it is only by constant prayer, and unfailing watchfulness, that he can hope to conquer his own evil habits and besetting sins, which *will* rise up against him again and again. But he must not allow these

enemies of his soul to discourage him: if they are persistent, so must he be; fighting the good fight of faith, with unflagging energies, every day and every hour; and relying upon his Lord alone for strength to do so.

And then, too, he must deny himself: taking up his cross daily, and following his Lord and Saviour.

And these are only a very few of the things he must do;—as he seeks in all things to walk worthy of his high calling. Indeed he knows very well that he never can do all he ought; and that, even if he could, he would still be an unprofitable servant, having but done that which it was his duty to do.

And does all this seem a great deal? And at the first thought, does it bow down the heart as with a great, an insupportable burden?—Yet it is written, “Faith without works is dead.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### *"FAITH THAT WORKETH BY LOVE."*

BUT is it *the Christian*, who even for an instant thinks of his Lord's service as an "insupportable burden?" Is it *the Christian* who says that such close and multiplied bonds cannot fail to be irksome?

Oh no, indeed it is not. And at the words "burden," and "bonds," the Christian only smiles—such a happy smile! His Lord said—"My yoke is easy, and My burden is light;" and the true Christian knows, and he only, how wholly true the words are. And if you could set him free, he would by no means accept your deliver-

and, but would bring only the closer to his Lord.

"But is the Christian really bound to do *so much*?"

Ask Him.

"To do *so much*?" he returns, surprised and sorrowful. "And, *bound*, did you say? I am not bound. There are no bonds in the service of the Lord. The Christian is as free as the air he breathes. His Heavenly Father says to him—'My son, give Me thine heart.' And when he does so, all else—and it is little enough—follows as a matter of course—and *must* follow through all eternity. (And in this '*must*' lies the Christian's greatest joy—or one of his greatest, for he has so many great joys.) But supposing he does *not* give his *heart* to his God—to his Lord and Saviour—no burden of mere service can help him. He may have all faith so that he could remove

mountains, he may bestow all his goods to feed the poor, he may even give his body to be burned, but it will profit him nothing. For—

‘ It is not the deed that we do,  
Though the deed be never so fair,  
But the *love* that the dear Lord looketh for,  
Hidden with holy care  
In the heart of the deed so fair.’ ”

*Love*, then, is the secret of it all. And the Christian, notwithstanding all that seems to be required of him, is really *free*. All he does, he does for love. And his Lord does not in any way compel his service, but only loves to accept it.

Love, then, is the Christian's ruling motive from first to last. And who wonders any more now at his self-denying life—his constant work — his inward happiness? Who wonders?—since every one knows how much, even the most unlikely persons will



do, when all-powerful love commands ? And then again—the sweet power that moves the Christian is a heavenly, and not an earthly love.

And so, as he works on—more and more devotedly day by day, and, “not fearfully, lest he should lose Christ, but joyfully, because he has found Him,” he longs intensely for the time when, freed from the distractions and trammels, and sorrows and ignorances, inseparable from this present state of being, his soul may be bound yet more closely to his Lord, and may see Him face to face, and serve Him without break for ever.

And his eyes flash with joy, or fill with tears of heavenly yearning, as he thinks of that happy time : and sometimes he scarcely dares think of it, it raises within him such an overpowering ecstasy of longing.

And does not all this explain also why

he so really rejoices at the arrival of each Sabbath - day — as worldly people can scarcely believe that he does? It is in many ways, to him, just a very little foretaste of heaven. And so he hastens to the house of his God, but he leaves it lingeringly, and worldly people think that in this too there is a kind of affectation. But it does not hurt him that they should think so—though he is far more grieved than they suppose, for *their* sakes—grieved that they are not also sharers in his joy.

And it is love too that kills all soul-destroying pride in his own work, that quenches so effectually self-righteousness and vainglory, and that even takes away his interest in the question as to whether he may attain a high place in heaven or not.

Yes, love explains all: and the Christian, strange though it may sound, does not care what his position may be, even in heaven,

so that it is chosen for him by his Lord, and so that, in occupying it, he may still look on Him whom his soul loveth, and worship Him with ever-increasing, loving worship for evermore.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, the Christian's abiding concern is, that he does not love more—that he does not do more—far, far more. There is so much, so very much to be done—oh, why can he not do it? —Why does he allow himself to be so continually hindered in running the race set before him? Also, if his love for his Lord was what it might be, how entirely powerless would *all* earth's attractions be! And how wholly ready would he be to labour with all his heart and soul and strength in the Master's vineyard while life lasted!

Does any one think that the mere love works for their own sake, or for

the sake of even the highest reward, could ever work like this "faith that worketh by love?"—love, that is, of course for the task itself, but *first*, for the heavenly Taskmaster.

## CHAPTER XII.

*"HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE."*

BUT what is the Christian's especial work?—his best, his dearest? It is that of winning souls—the work of persuading others to approach, and to find their present happiness also in these joys that will endure for ever.

And how does the Christian win souls?

Not by forcing his religion into view on every possible occasion; but by watching his opportunity, and then speaking. And while he speaks he also prays: for what can his feeble words do, unless blessed by his God?

Not by continually telling men of the

righteous anger, and surely approaching judgments of the great Lord God, who has kept silence long ; but who at length will come, and will *not* keep silence. It is true that the Christian does speak of these things—and he most certainly ought to do so ; but he is not constantly speaking of them. He calls to mind, and strives to act upon the Apostle's words—"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we *persuade* men." He knows that his Lord *is* terrible, and he rejoices in the knowledge, for by this very terribleness He will, in due time, "the hosts of hell defeat." But the Christian chooses rather to tell of His love—and he is happy if he may be permitted to *persuade*—if he may be a humble and unobtrusive, but faithful teacher—a guide into the way of life eternal—a light to lead to the Light of the world.

And neither does he, in his work, con-

stantly show over-anxiety as to the case of this or that particular soul. *His* work upon it, for anything he can tell, may be but a passing one. "Souls are not perfected at once," it has been said, "though they were saved long ago." And the Christian knows that in very many cases he may have to sow the good seed—and to sow only. It may spring up, and other hands may tend it, and others again may presently come and reap. But the true-hearted Christian does not concern himself about this. He simply trusts his Lord, and goes on sowing. The Master knows how to divide His work among His servants, and the day will yet come when sower and reaper shall rejoice together. And the Christian sings—

"Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice :

For toil comes rest, for exile home ;

Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice

The midnight cry, '*Behold I come !*'"

But how does the Christian win souls?

By the example of his own life—the most difficult means of all, though it may at first sight appear the simplest. By words from the Book of the Lord—spoken to, and put in the way of, all with whom he comes in contact. By patient, forbearing endurance of the *impatience* of those to whom he speaks. By prayer. By words of comfort spoken to those in sorrow. By heavenly counsel and encouragement in times of anxiety. By perseverance. By kindness. By love unfeigned. By *all* means—if by *any* means he may save some.

And as he goes on his way—trusted and believed in by a few, but misunderstood and suspected, avoided, looked coldly on, ridiculed and despised by many, he says to himself—

“Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not,  
The Master praises ;—what are men ?



Go, labour on, while yet 'tis day,  
The world's dark night is hastening on ;  
Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth away ;  
It is not thus that souls are won.

“Men die in darkness at your side,  
Without a hope to cheer the tomb ;  
Take up the torch, and wave it wide—  
The torch that lights Time's thickest gloom.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

*"OCCUPY TILL I COME."*

BUT many men who are not Christians have also their especial and all-absorbing work; a work, perhaps it may be, by which they hope to benefit mankind at large. And what happy men these are!—for the present, that is. Yet the idle worldling who lives but to amuse himself, laughs at them! And the plodding, daily worker, with no special object in view, cannot understand the eager, ardent delight which so evidently possesses them. Time never hangs heavily on their hands: dull, dark, monotonous days seem to have been left out of the plan of their lives. They are

ever urged joyfully onward by the bright goal they have in view. They work—they strive—they take all imaginable pains—they also, like the Christian, spend, and are spent—they also, step by step, labour up the steep ascent of *their* “hill difficulty.” They also endure ridicule, misunderstanding and contempt, and say—“What do these things signify?”

“Success” will, they declare, amply reward them for all. Success will give them wealth for poverty—respect for ridicule—admiration for misunderstanding—laudation for contempt. And in their work, and in their dreams of all that is to come to them, they are happy.

What, then, is the difference between these men and Christians?

The surface-likeness lasts but a few steps further, then the difference begins.

They work on; and at last, if they have

worked hard enough, and thoroughly, and carefully, and patiently enough, perhaps they reach success—possibly a success even beyond their highest hopes. But does it bring them all they looked for? No: when they look into their hearts there is still a want—a strange void—a sense of dissatisfaction:—and soon they hurry on again, crying out—

“ The virtue lies  
In the struggle, not the prize ! ”

And when they reach their next hope they do the same again; and so they go on while life lasts. But when their years begin to draw to a close, their hopes rapidly close in also. The great dread enemy Death bounds all they can do. Before him they are wholly powerless. Their work is for time: for eternity they have made no calculation.

And without complaint, for where would be the use of complaining of "the inevitable?"—they make their preparations for leaving all they have done behind them; and they do not look ever to see it, or to hear of it again. How should they, indeed? What ground would they have for doing so!

Can the lives of these men, therefore—though they get a good deal of happiness out of them, more than most men, and far more than any mere pleasure-seeker ever gets—and though they do much good, it may be—can their lives be deemed satisfactory? Contrast their hopes, which, in a sense, failed them one by one as they came up with them, with the Christian's one great and blessed hope—set bright and clear beyond the grave, shining only *more* gloriously as Death approaches—grim terrible Death, that yet has no terrors for him.

But what is the Christian's hope ?

His Lord says—

“OCCUPY TILL I COME.”

In these four words lie his work, and also his beautiful hope.

His work is pleasant to him in itself ; nay, it is more than pleasant, it is delightful ; but the point of its pleasure is that it is done, not for himself, but for the Lord and Master to whom he has given his heart's best love, and for his human brothers and sisters whom he loves only next to his Lord. And also it delights him to think that his work is not its own end, but a means to a great eternal end, and that, in short, even inexorable Time cannot touch, save to beautify it.

But his pleasure has a yet more beautiful point. He must go on working patiently—but for how long ? Sometimes when he is weary he puts this question to himself ;

and its answer is as balm to his tired heart, and as renewed strength and courage to both body and mind. For how long is he to go on working?—*Till his Lord, shall come.*

And the Master may return from the far country this very day. He has always this hope in his heart. And then whatever is trying or troubling him will be ended in a moment, and he will know only unclouded happiness for evermore.

But *whenever* the Master comes, He will expect to find all those who really love Him ready and waiting for Him. Here is a hope indeed! A great incentive also to ever higher living—ever more intent, and whole-souled working.

Moreover, if the Christian lives thus—“with his loins girded about, and his light burning,” ever watching and waiting for his Lord, the things of this world gradually

lose their hold upon him; little by little they fall below his blessed heavenly hope. And often he forgets to think even of death itself:—for if he is ready for the appearance of the Great Judge of all the earth, it follows that he is also ready for a summons to His presence by death.

And at length, even disappointments and failures in his work as a Christian no longer greatly grieve and humble him. He has learnt that he has to do the work in his Lord's strength, and as in His sight; and that that is all. He has nothing to do with results; they are the Master's care; and he remembers that though

“Men may praise the full achievement, *Heaven*  
may praise its failure.”

He knows not what is best, therefore; but all is well, for the Master knows; and



as in peace and content he still advances step by step on his way, he repeats to himself day by day that dear Master's command—

*“ Occupy till I come.”*

## CHAPTER XIV.

*"FOUNDED UPON A ROCK."*

AND while the Christian works, the world works also. And opinions and systems, rise and fall: and kingdoms are put down, and set up, and put down again. Nothing is sure; nothing is lasting. This thing is great, and everywhere talked of to-day—that thing has risen in its place to-morrow. Such a person is your friend to-day—but to-morrow, for anything you can tell to the contrary, he may be your enemy. Riches make to themselves wings and fly away; sickness comes instead of health; and death is always busy everywhere. The hand of change is never at

rest.—But who can name or number *all* the trials and troubles to which man is born as the sparks fly upward?

Yet none of these things can dislodge the soul of the Christian from its rest, for it is “founded upon a rock.” And though the rain may descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon his heaven-built house, it will remain unmoved. And he will sing—

“The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn also of my salvation, and my high tower.”

And sometimes when he reflects upon the changes which are so constantly taking place around him, he says—

“What shall the future progress be  
Of life with me?

God knows,—I roll on Him my care,—  
Night is not night if He be there.

When daylight is no longer mine,  
And stars forbidden are to shine,  
I'll turn mine eyes  
To where eternal day shall rise."

And, meanwhile, there on the throne of his heart his Lord sits King for evermore. *He* guides—*He* governs—*He* sustains. The Christian trusts him implicitly—leaves all to Him, for He can never err—and says to his soul—

"My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him."

And sometimes he murmurs in his happy heart—

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are *more than conquerors* through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor

~~THESE THINGS~~ THE POWERS, NOR THINGS PRE-  
SENT, NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR HEIGHT, NOR  
DEPTH, NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE, SHALL BE ABLE  
TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD, WHICH IS  
IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

And all though worlds may be shaken,  
the Christian cannot be; though heaven  
and earth may pass away, he cannot be  
moved; for the God of heaven and earth,  
and of the whole universe, holds him  
fast.

Yes: his God holds him: in the know-  
ledge and realisation of that fact lies his  
utter security. He could not hold himself.  
Could a child keep his footing on the rock  
in a storm? No: he would be in an in-  
stant swept away into the seething billows.  
Nevertheless, with his childish hand held  
fast in his father's firm, strong, loving one,  
he might stand up and gaze around him  
fearlessly. And so with the Christian. He

is "founded upon a rock " by no strength, no feeble effort of his own, but because the loving hand of his heavenly Father holds him there — and will so hold him for ever.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *"AS A LITTLE CHILD."*

"As a little child relies  
On a care beyond his own,  
Knows he's neither strong nor wise,  
Fears to stir a step alone,  
Let me thus with Thee abide,  
As my Father, Guard, and Guide."

AND the Christian should be as a little child, not only in his entire trust in and dependence upon his heavenly Father, but in his ready, unmeasured love, and simple, unquestioning obedience; in his humility, submission, and innocence; in his cheerfulness and hopefulness.

In a child's little world his parents are what they say must be right:—

what they do may not be questioned. Where they lead he follows readily; what they give he takes without a doubt. With their approval he is strong; and in the sunshine of their smiles his little face beams with gladness. But their frown can in a moment disturb all his peace—it is as though a sudden darkness had overshadowed him, and his young heart begins at once to heave with its immeasurable grief and trouble.

There are many things in his daily life which the child cannot understand; but recognising (however unconsciously) his own ignorance, he accepts them, for the most part, without question, and in all humility—possibly occasionally looking forward to the time when he shall be grown up like his father, and when the things which puzzle him now will no doubt all be made plain.



And how lovable do his simple, happy trust, and innocence, and humility, make him! And in almost every point of his character, how many lessons different Christians can find.

And it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who sets up the little child as a pattern for all His followers.

The disciples, in their earthly pride, we read, had been disputing among themselves as to who should be the *greatest*: and at length they put the question to their Lord —“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

“And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not *enter* into the kingdom of  
- - - .”

an unanswerable reply: and how

wonderful alike in its wisdom and in its beauty !

And while it was being given, there sat the little unthinking creature, whom the Lord Himself had chosen, and placed there among those grown-up men—as text and sermon in one. No pride disturbed the innocence of the little careless brow—no fear troubled the little heart. The eyes that had met the searching, childish ones, had wholly satisfied them. The hands that had touched the little yielding form had been—oh how gentle ! And so it sat in its docility where it had been placed, as a child would, little imagining in its simplicity that the Saviour of the world was pointing it out as an example for all those grave, grown men, who stood around. And when He presently took it in His arms (St. Mark ix. 36), while He continued speaking to His disciples, doubt-

less the little one's happiness was complete.

And to how many serious thoughts must that little unconscious face have given rise in the minds of the apostles of the world ! And who can tell how often that living lesson may have occurred to their minds, and influenced their actions in after times ? —or how often also they may have recalled other words of the Saviour, spoken when they had rebuked the mothers who had brought their children to Him—

“ Verily I say unto you, *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein* ” (St. Mark x. 15).

## CHAPTER XVI.

*"EYE HATH NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD."*

THE Christian, as we have seen, has his great and precious joys in this life—joys which he would not exchange for all that the world can give—but how many more has he to come?

He reads not a few distinct promises in the Word of his God—language indeed could not make them clearer, or more decided than they are—but they are so great and marvellous as to be beyond his utmost powers of realisation for the present; and he can only remember his example, the little child, again; and simply believe and rejoice.

He reads that at that glorious coming of the Lord, for which he waits, his body, whether living, or long turned to dust in the grave, shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and made like the Saviour's resurrection body—to know no more weariness, or pain, or age, or death—for ever. And he believes—but can he realise?

He reads that he will reign with his Lord—the King of kings: that he will share His glory, as a queen shares the glory with her sovereign lord and king; and that when he sits on the throne beside this King of the whole world, he will be as dear to Him as one thought of, and waited for, and prepared for, for ages, would—must be—dear. As one for whom much had been renounced, for whom a life of labour and privation, and a death of suffering and shame, had been endured, would be

dear. And the Christian believes all this : he is bound on the word of his God to believe it—but can he realise it?—that a destiny so great, so glorious, so dear, can indeed be in store for *him* ?

He believes, moreover, that in the wondrously full and complete life to come, he will have the joy of a distinct individuality, and at the same time that of a perfect oneness with all those whom he loves, and with his Lord ; that he will, as his Bible tells him, be a member of that one body of which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be the Divine Head. And again, can he realise this ?

He believes that he will look down upon, and take part in, the government of a happy world—a world from which war and bloodshed, and ignorance and evil, will have been banished—a world which shall be filled with peace, and loveliness, and

holiness, and joy. And, try as he may, can the Christian realise this? No: he may only, like his pattern, the little child, once more, in all humility, believe and trust and wait.

And can he realise a life continuing, throughout endless ages, happy in the never-changing love of his Lord, and of all around!—wanting no variety, for he shall want nothing? A life in which he shall grow in wisdom—making progress onward and upward for ever—without any of the sorrowful changes which progress always brings in the present. A life in which new and beautiful hopes will rise continually, to be as continually satisfied—for disappointment will be known no more? A life, as of summer without winter, of day without night?

And these are but a few of the blessings

but if the Christian were to

recount all he could remember, he would still have to end with words like these—

“Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.”

“As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Oh, who would not be a Christian!



## CHAPTER XVII.

### WHY ARE YOU NOT ANXIOUS?

“ You have told me nothing to move me,” answers one. “ I have heard all these things before, and many more like them ; and when the day of judgment comes—if it ever does come—I daresay I shall do as well as others.”

But how will those others, of whom you are thinking, do ? They will cry out—  
“ Woe unto our souls, for *we have rewarded evil unto ourselves !*”

That you are no worse than thousands of others will not avail in that day to still  
for the remorse and repentance

which will seize upon you, when too late the words come home to you—"There is no difference: *all* have sinned."

And because you *see* no danger, does it therefore follow that there is none? Possibly you see none because you have never looked for it. Can the blind see danger? And sin unrepented of, not only blinds the eyes, but hardens the heart, and stops the ears.

But perhaps—not being anxious—you have a stronger, more terrible ground of assurance, than ignorance of danger. Perhaps you are holding up before you the great shield—not of faith, but of *unbelief*—which the god of this world gives to his followers; and you have merely to answer to each assertion of the Christian—

"I do not believe it."

And possibly you say—"There is no God:"—even though the Word of God

declares that *the fool hath said in his heart*,  
"There is no God."

Even the fool dares say so only in his heart, lest, uttering the words aloud, he should too openly give evidence of his folly. What! In a wonderful world like this, that displays such infinite skill in every direction, and in the formation of everything, both animate and inanimate, alike from greatest to least, and from least to greatest—yet *no God!*

Who then made our earth? Who made us? Who keeps us hourly—momently? And whence comes this subtle consciousness within us, which we fight against in vain, and which asserts constantly that we certainly *have* a Maker—and that Maker is none other, can be none other, than the great God of the universe? Who also made all other worlds? Who keeps *them*? Who *made all things* by the word of His

power? Truly a wise man would hesitate long before he presumed to say—"There is no God."

But perhaps you believe in the great Almighty Maker and Ruler of all things, yet say—"It is not likely that such a Being, whose praise is utterly beyond any language of earth, concerns Himself particularly about the doings of men."

But would it not be wiser to find some proof of this before acting upon it, and risking an eternity of joy upon a mere supposition?

The great God is perfection: He loves perfection: He has shown it in all His works: and nothing short of it will satisfy Him. And as nothing is above, so we may be sure that nothing is beneath His regard; and that He who watches the fall of a sparrow, and feeds the young ravens when they cry unto Him, also looks down with

the same all-seeing, unslumbering eye upon the first among His earthly creatures—man. He telleth the number of the stars, we are told, and calleth them all by their names: but also, it is He who healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

Job says—

“Doth not He see my ways, and count all my steps?”

And David—

“O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my *downsitting* and mine *uprising*, Thou understandest my *thoughts* long before. Thou compassest my *path* and my *lying down*, and art acquainted with *all my ways*. For *there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether*” (Ps. cxxxix.)

And again—

“Whoso is wise, and will observe these

things, even they shall understand *the loving-kindness of the Lord.*"

But now another says—

"I do not deny *the truth* of religion, but what I do deny is its *attractiveness*. At the very outset it humbles me by declaring that I am a 'sinner without excuse,' and that nothing I can possibly do will avail in the least degree towards saving me from the punishment I deserve. It requires me to own this freely, and at the same time to give an undivided *heart* to the Lord, and to live for Him hourly. And then it promises me a heaven in which I do not see how I could be happy—since what pleases me most here, I am sure I should not find there."

"The natural man," says Scripture, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. xi. 14).

But the Christian does not assert that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is attractive in its outward appearance. No: this is so to speak, but the husk—the shell—the rough outer covering—the strong casket containing the precious pearl of great price.

Is the brown, unsightly bulb attractive, that yet enfolds—to be revealed in its season—the fair and stately lily?

Is the little insignificant acorn attractive, that yet produces, in due time, the giant oak?

Is the apparently dead chrysalis attractive?—Yet from it presently emerges a lovely creature that

“Flies, and seems a flower that floats in air.”

And so neither is this *anxiety*, about which Christians so closely question you, attractive—that godly sorrow for sin which worketh repentance *not to be repented*

of—yet, one day, when you behold its glorious fruit, you will wish that you had even *sought* it.

Oh, will you not begin the search this very day ? Will you not take the Book of the Lord, and study it for yourself, in order to discover whether these things are so ? Will you not begin, in humble, prayerful spirit, at the first page, and read, without bias or prejudice to the last, as you would read a book wholly new to you ? And will you consider it then—not in parts, but as a wonderful whole ? And, please God, what may seem your strange search for *anxiety* shall not fail you, and you will yet bless the day on which you were persuaded to undertake it ; for its end and fruit shall be—eternal *peace*.





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